

Before the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
State of Florida

Inquiry Concerning a Judge  
No. 04-455, Judge John R. Sloop

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Supreme Court of Florida  
Case No.: SC05-555

**ANSWER AND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

The Honorable John R. Sloop, by and through his undersigned attorney, and pursuant to Rule 9 of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission Rules, files this Answer and Affirmative Defenses to the Notice of Formal Charges served on or about April 5, 2005. In response to the particular numbered paragraphs, 1 through 3, of the Notice of Formal Charges, Judge Sloop answers as follows:

1. Admit to issuing arrest warrants on December 3, 2004, for criminal traffic misdemeanor Defendants who were not present when names were called at docket sounding and had either overlooked their written notice to be in Courtroom A1 A@ or had been improperly/mistakenly directed to Courtroom A1 B@ by judicial deputy sheriffs performing security duties at the front door or by other persons unknown.

Admit that after court was in recess and personnel had left, and after the warrants had been issued at docket sounding, Judge Sloop was told that several criminal defendants had been in Courtroom A1 B@ and arrest warrants should not be issued. Admit

reversing decision upon reflection during noon recess and signing written orders for their immediate release ROR® which the Clerk received at 2:22 and 2:23 p.m. and which were fax transmitted to the jail by 3:49 p.m.

Admit this occurred before Chief Judge James E.C. Perry contacted Jail Director Diggs by telephone to order the release of those defendants. Chief Judge Perry had contacted Jail Director Diggs following the issuance of the order entered by Judge Sloop to release said defendants as stated above.

2. Admit that Judge Sloop departed from his 14 year practice of issuing warrants at the end of the docket, he instead issued them as each defendant's name was called during the week of November 29, 2004. Judge Sloop was advised that other Seminole County Judges handled their dockets by immediately issuing warrants at the time the name was called instead of waiting until the end of the docket. During the week of November 29, 2004, Judge Sloop conformed to that practice by immediately issuing warrants, this had not been the ordinary practice of his Court.

3. Admit to requiring Defendant Ramos, Case No. 04-2343-CFA, who was accused with stabbing his pregnant girlfriend, to participate in electronic monitoring to protect the victim and was unaware after ordering his release on electronic monitoring that Defendant Ramos did not qualify for electronic monitoring. His

lawyer did not advise Judge Sloop that Mr. Ramos was unable to be released. After Defendant Ramos's case was assigned to the felony division he was released on his own recognizance by another judge.

Judge Sloop was further unaware that Defendant Jones sought a writ of habeas corpus to obtain his release and has no knowledge as to Defendant Jones being unlawfully detained by this Court.

### **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

1. After the events alleged within Count I of the Formal Charges occurred, Judge Sloop recognized he may be suffering from a disorder which effected his ability to remain focused and to make quick decisions. He has since obtained professional counseling and been found by said professional to be suffering from Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Judge Sloop is now being treated with daily medication which has corrected the problem that existed in its entirety.

2. Once Judge Sloop ordered the release of the Defendants within Count I of the Formal Charges, he assumed they would all be released promptly and had no knowledge that any of those Defendants were held for an exceptional period of time.

3. Judge Sloop was further unaware that Defendant Ramos in Count III of the Formal Charges did not qualify for electronic

monitoring. No person at any time brought this back to the Courts attention so the Court could order another form of release for Defendant Ramos.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of this document has been delivered by Regular US Mail to Lauri Waldman Ross, Esquire, *Lauri Waldman Ross, P.A.*, Two Datan Center, Suite 1612, 9130 South Dadeland Blvd., Miami, Florida 33156-7818, Special Counsel for the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission, and Thomas C. MacDonald, Jr., Esq., 1904 Holly Lane, Tampa, Florida 33629, General Counsel for the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of April 2005, by Regular US Mail.

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